

WASHINGTON – Congressman John W. Olver (1st District) announced today that the funding for the fiscal year 2019 has been approved. The funding was included in the Omnibus Appropriations Conference Report approved by the House of Representatives. “I am pleased that Congress has finally approved a spending bill for the fiscal year that will provide funding for the projects that are important to the people of Berkshire County. A summary of these projects is included below.

Mount Greylock Scenic Byway: \$1.1 million

Olver secured \$1.1 million in the spending bill for safety improvements to Reservoir Road. “Reservoir Road is notoriously narrow and windy, which creates problems for tourists and local residents. For more information, contact Nat Karns, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, at 413-229-0100.

Mohawk Trail and Jacob’s Ladder Trail: \$1 million

The spending bill includes \$1 million for scenic enhancements and safety improvements along the Mohawk Trail. The Mohawk Trail project will improve scenic vistas and create additional pullovers along the trail. Along Route 20, the Jacob’s Ladder Trail, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is working on a project to improve the trail. “These trails showcase the beauty of western Massachusetts,” Olver said. “This funding will help to improve the trails and make them safer for visitors. For more information, contact Nat Karns, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, at 413-229-0100.

Transportation Association of Northern Berkshire Inc., North Adams: \$400,000

This funding will support Transportation Association of Northern Berkshire (TANB) Inc., a non-profit organization that provides public transportation services in the northern Berkshire region. “There has always been a tremendous need for public transportation services in the northern Berkshire region. Working in conjunction with the Berkshire Regional Transit Administration (BRTA) and the Town of North Adams, TANB is working to improve the public transportation system. For more information, please contact Roger Breckner, executive director of TANB, at 413-229-0100.

Southern Berkshire Forest Legacy Projects: \$805,000

The bill provides \$805,000 total for two Forest Legacy projects in southern Berkshire County. “Southern Berkshire County comprises one of the largest and least fragmented forests in the state. For more information, contact Frank Lowenstein at the Nature Conservancy at 413-229-0100.

Weed-it-Now Initiative: \$200,000

The Weed-It-Now initiative is a program of the Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This funding will continue to support Weed-It-Now's work with a broad coalition of public and private organizations.

"The forest in this area is a major resource for the region," Oliver said. "The Nature Conservancy is pleased to support this initiative."

For more information, contact Frank Lowenstein at the Nature Conservancy, at 413-229-1234.

Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield: \$575,000

As the region's only museum of art, history and natural science, the Berkshire Museum is a vital part of the community.

"The Berkshire Museum is a fundamental part of the cultural heritage of the Berkshires and the region," said Ann Mintz, director.

For more information, contact Ann Mintz, director, at 413-443-7171 ext.22.

Girls Incorporated of the Berkshires, Pittsfield: \$322,500

Oliver secured \$322,500 for Girls Incorporated of the Berkshires to renovate and update its facilities.

"The services provided by Girls Inc. are too important to this community to be impeded by outdated facilities," said Carol Bradwell, executive director.

The funding will help with a range of repairs and renovations that will be done in phases over the next year.

For more information, contact Carol Bradwell, executive director of Girls Inc. of the Berkshires, at 413-443-7171.

Christian Center's Up-Reach Center, Pittsfield: \$300,000

The Christian Center is a humanitarian and educational non-profit organization that provides services to the community.

"Participation in programs like the ones at the Children's Up-reach Center for Success is essential for the well-being of our youth," said Cheryl Nolan, executive director.

Funding would expand these programs by increasing the number of participants and access to resources.

For further information, contact Cheryl Nolan, executive director of the Christian Center, at 413-443-7171.

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